

23 April 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: State/JCS Meeting

1. Today I attended the State/JCS meeting in the Pentagon with Ambassador Holmes of Tehran as the principal speaker.

2. Ambassador Holmes began by summarizing the strategic importance of Iran, pointing out that its geography and its juxtaposition to the USSR give it considerable importance from a military point of view. Regarding Iran's relations with the Soviet Union, its neighbor immediately to the north, he said that these relations have improved over the past several years. The Soviets are placing less propaganda pressure on Iran than they were. Meanwhile, trade between the two countries has continued.

3. He described the Shah of Iran as an exceedingly able man. He characterized the Shah's chief concerns at present as (a) the ever continuing--though at present lessened--threat by the USSR; (b) the achievement of Arab political unity under the leadership of Nasir; (c) a movement by a Nasir-led group against the oil fields in the Persian Gulf; and (d) military attack by Iraq, backed by Egypt. Ambassador Holmes said that none of these concerns is pressing at present.

4. He concluded by saying that at present we can feel confident and comfortable about Iran.

The only real threat in the present situation is the possibility of the Shah's assassination. He pointed out that such an attempt had recently been made. Other than this, conditions within the country are good and improving. In particular, he said that the military forces have improved steadily during the past two or three years under the US military aid program.

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